

Message Text

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NODIS

FOR THE SECRETARY AND SCHAUFLE FROM EDMONDSON

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PFOR, RH
SUBJECT: BRITISH CONCERN ABOUT FRONTLINE STATES MEETING

1. PHILIP MANSFIELD CAME TO SEE ME AT EMBASSY GABORONE THIS AFTERNOON TO REVIEW SOME OF THE BRITISH THINKING ABOUT RHODESIA AND TO ASK HIS REAL REASON, IS SUSPECT WHETHER I THOUGHT THERE WAS ANYTHING THEUSG MIGHT DO TO URGE THE FRONTLINE STATES TO AVOID TAKING UNHELPFUL POSITIONS AT UPCOMING LUSAKA MEETING OF MATIONALISTS AND FRONTLINE STATES. HE THOUGHT THERE WAS DANGER OF MEETING TAKING LINE OF ITS MOST RADICAL PARTICIPANTS AND COMING OUT WITH SOME KIND OF STATEMENT ENDORSING CONTINUATION OF GUERRILLA WARFARE.

2. GIVEN THE DEVELOPING THRUST OF RICHARD'S MISSION, I.E. TO TRY TO WIN VORSTER AND SMITH OVER TO THE BRITISH PROPOSALS BY OBTAINING ASSURANCE THAT GUERRILLA WARFARE WOULD CEASE UPON THE INSTALLATION OF AN AGREED INTERIM GOVERNMENT, THE BRITISH FEAR THAT THE LUSAKA MEETING COULD BE RACIAL.

UNHELPFUL STATEMENTS ABOUT CONTINUING THE WAR WOULD TEND TO CONFIRM SMITH IN HIS RESISTANCE TO THE BRITISH PROPOSALS. IF THE AFRICANS COULD BE PERSUADED TO HOLD OUT HOPE FOR A CESSATION OF HOSTILITIES,
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ON THE OTHER HAND, THIS WOULD ALMOST CERTAINLY HAVE A BENEFICIAL EFFECT UPON VORSTER AND POSSIBLY ALSO ON SMITH.

3. MANSFIELD FELT THAT VORSTER'S POSITION ON THE RHODESIAN QUESTION WAS QUITE LOGICAL, THAT VORSTER BELIEVED HE HAD STUCK HIS NECK OUT FAR ENOUGH IN GETTING SMITH TO AGREE TO THE FIVE POINTS AND WAS NOT WILLING TO STICK IT OUT FURTHER WITHOUT SOMETHING TO SHOW FOR IT.
IT IS THE BRITISH HOPE THAT AN END OF GUERRILLA WARFARE WOULD BE SUFFICIENTLY ATTRACTIVE TO WIN VORSTERS SUPPORT.

4. I ASKED WHAT IT WAS THAT MADE RICHARD THINK THAT SMITH MIGHT ALSO BE ATTRACTED ENOUGH TO RECONSIDER HIS REJECTION OF THE BRITISH IDEAS FOR AN INTERIM GOVERNMENT AND QUERIED HIM SPECIFICALLY ABOUT THE ORIGINS OF A FRONT PAGE STORY IN THE BULWAYO "CHRONICLE" THAT SAID:
"IT COULD NOW BE LIKELY THAT AFTER HIS KEY VISIT TO SOUTH AFRICAN MR. RICHARD COULD SEEK ASSURANCES FROM THE BLACK PRESIDENTS THAT THEY COULD PROVE TO MR. SMITH THEIR ABILITY TO STOP OR DRASTICALLY REDUCE THE WAR. WITH SUCH ASSURANCES, MR. RICHARD COULD TRY TO PERSUADE MR SMITH TO SEE MERIT IN HIS PROPOSALS WHEN HE RETURNS TO SALISBUR."

5. MANSFIELD AGREED THAT THE "CHRONICLE" ARTICLE WAS ON TARGET BUT DID NOT KNOW ITS ORIGIN. HE SAID THE SUBJECT OF ENDING HOSTILITIES WAS NOT SPECIFICALLY DISCUSSED WITH SMITH AND THOUGHT THAT RICHARD CAME TO TO CONCLUSION THAT THIS MIGHT BE THE ONLY WAY TO GET SMITH TO CONSIDER THE BRITISH PROPOSALS AFTER HE HAD MET A NUMBER OF OTHER RHODESIANS, ALL OF WHOM WERE GREATLY CONCERNED ABOUT THE INCREASING TOLL OF THE WAR. HE MENTIONED THE FACT THAT PAT BISHFORD'S SONE WAS KILLED ON CHRISTMAS DAY AND SAID THAT RHICHARD AND HIS PART HAD DETECTED GROWING PUBLIC CONERN IN RHODESIAN ABOUT CASUALTIES AMONG THE ARMED FORCES.

6. BECAUSE THE DESIRE OF ALL PARTIES FOR A CESSATION OF WARFARE
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OFFERS THE BEST HOPE FOR KEEPING NEGOTIATIONS ALIVE, MANSFIELD BELIEVED AN EFFORT SHOULD BE MADE TO URGE THE FRONTLINE LEADERS TO AVOID FURTHER COMMITMENT TO WAR WHEN THEY MEET IN LUSAKA ON SATURDAY. HE ASKED AGAIN IF THE US MIGHT BE ABLE TO UNDERTAKE REPRESENTATIONS AND WONDERED IF I MIGHT BE PLANNING TO SEE BOTSWANA FOREIGN MINISTER MOGWE. I REPLIED THAT I HAD NO INSTRUCTIONS TO UNDERTAKE ANY INITIATIIIVES WITH THE AFRICAN GOVERNMENTS BUT WOULD REPORT HIS OBSERVATIONS AND QUESTION TO THE DEPARTMENT. (RICHARD IS SEEING MOGWE AT WORKING DINNER LATER TONIGHT AND WILL SEE KHAMA TOMORROW MORNING.)
NORLAND

SECRET

<< END OF DOCUMENT >>

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